

# Amazing THAILAND *experience variety*

Thailand Travel Talk • September-October 2003



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TAT Kuala Lumpur Office  
(Malaysia/Brunei)

## A World of Difference Partnerships for the Future



The APEC summit in October 2003 will bring hundreds of delegates from the Asia-Pacific countries involved in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation group to Thailand. The series of meetings to be held will explore topics such as finance and information technology to transportation, environmental issues and tourism and will see an exchange of dialogue between the public and private sectors.

Since its formation in 1989, APEC has a total membership of 21 economic jurisdictions, a population of over 2.5 billion, and a combined GDP of 19 trillion US Dollars accounting for 47 per cent of world trade. The current objective of the organisation is the 'Bogor Goals' which would see a free and open trade and investment in Asia-Pacific by 2010 for developed economies and 2020 for developing countries. Emphasis is placed on liberalisation, business facilitation, and economic and technical cooperation.

Tourism, an important item on the agenda, was discussed by a working group between 9-14 June 2003.

Said Tourism Authority of Thailand Governor Mrs Juthamas Siriwan, "It is very gratifying to see such a series of high-level meetings taking place in Thailand. They will help show the world that Thailand is a safe and peaceful country that enjoys the confidence of global leaders and investors."

Meetings has been strategically arranged all over the country with locations including Khon Kaen, Phuket, Pattaya, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai and Chanthaburi.

Officials have already met beginning February 2003 in Chiang Rai and at Khon Kaen where the agenda for the summit was planned and scheduled. The Study Centre Consortium was held in Phuket between 26-28 May while the final meeting will be held in October. Bangkok will host the private sector CEO summit on 18-22 October and the APEC leaders summit on 20-21 October.

Thailand has benefited in many ways from the APEC 2003 with a cultural interaction that took place between the 21 delegates from 21 economies. Delegates visit many locations in the host country and bring home the knowledge they gained.



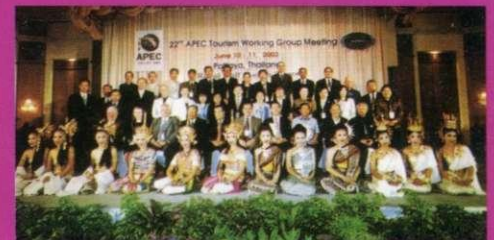
## APEC Tourism Working Group

The 22nd meeting of the APEC Tourism Working Group (TWG) took place from 10-11 June 2003. Delegates were from over 16 APEC economies and invited guests from Macau SAR, the World Tourism and Travel Council, and the Asia Pacific Asia Travel Association.

The meeting resulted in four policy goals:

- 1) to remove impediments to the tourism business and investment;
- 2) to increase the mobility of visitors and demand for tourism goods and services;
- 3) to create sustainable management of tourism outcomes and impacts; and
- 4) to enhance the recognition and understanding of tourism as a vehicle for economic and social development.

The meeting closed with the TWG issuing a 'Statement on the Impact of SARS on Tourism in the APEC Region'. The statement noted that the Asia-Pacific had an underlying resilience of travel and tourism in the region despite recent economic, health and other setbacks.



The Thai Government is increasing the visa fees for residents of countries needing visas to travel to the kingdom effective August 26, 2003:-

1. Transit visas – 800 baht
2. Tourist visas – 1,000 baht
3. Non-immigrant visa – 2,000 baht (single entry)  
– 5,000 baht (multiple entry)





# Thai Puppets



One of Thailand's famous traditions is the art of puppetry – puppet-making and manipulation. Masked play, known as *khon* and classical dance-drama known as *lakhon* are traditions passed from generation to generation until the present time. Manipulation or movement of the puppet are synchronised to the music through strings or human fingers.

Puppet theatre is documented to have appeared in the era of the Ayutthaya period, during the reign of King Narai the Great (1656-1688). During the Thonburi period, (1767-1782) the transport of the Emerald Buddha from Vientiane, Laos was celebrated with a puppetry performance.

There are several forms of theatre such as *hun luang* (royal puppets), *hun wang na* (the viceregal puppets), *hun krabok* (bamboo-rod puppets) and *hun lakhon lek* (a different version of the *hun luang* puppets).



## Information

Every night at 20.00hr at the Suan Lum Night Bazaar, the Joe Louis Theatre performs and demonstrates the making and manipulation of puppets.

### Tickets:

600 Baht per adults/300 Baht per child

### Reservations:

Reservations can be made directly with the Joe Louis Theatre office.

### Office hours:

09.30-21.30 (Mon-Fri), 13.00-21.30 (Sat-Sun)

### Contact Information:

Joe Louise Theatre at Suan Lum Night Bazaar

Sun Lum Night Bazaar, 1875 Rama IV Road Lumpini, Pathumwan, Bangkok 10330

Tel/Fax : 66 (0) 2252 9683-5

E-mail: joelouisetheater@hotmail.com

**Note:** Chakrabhand Posayakrit Puppet Theatre does not perform regularly. The new collection and performance of Taleng Pai is under way and in rehearsal. Dates of performance are not yet fixed.

## SITE International Delegation Expected at IT&CMA

Bangkok will play host to the Incentive Travel & Conventions, Meetings Asia (IT&CMA), a focal event for travel associations such as Society of Incentive & Travel Executives (SITE) International. The meeting will be held from 4-6 November 2003 at the Impact Convention Centre and is organised by TTG Asia Media.

Executive Director/Chief Executive Officer Brenda Anderson and Paul Flackett, Managing Director of IMEX will lead the SITE International delegation expected at IT&CMA.

"Asia-Pacific is a strong and important part of the global incentives community and we are excited to meet face-to-face with the many SITE members from this part of the world," Anderson said. "Participating in IT&CMA is an excellent opportunity for us to showcase what SITE does and expand our universe of business contacts."

Darren Ng, Managing Director, TTG Asia Media says, "IT&CMA has always been an excellent platform to meet up with business associates and colleagues from around the world."

For more information, visit [www.itcma.com.sg](http://www.itcma.com.sg) or email [itcma@ttgasia.com](mailto:itcma@ttgasia.com).

## Historic Temple Reopens

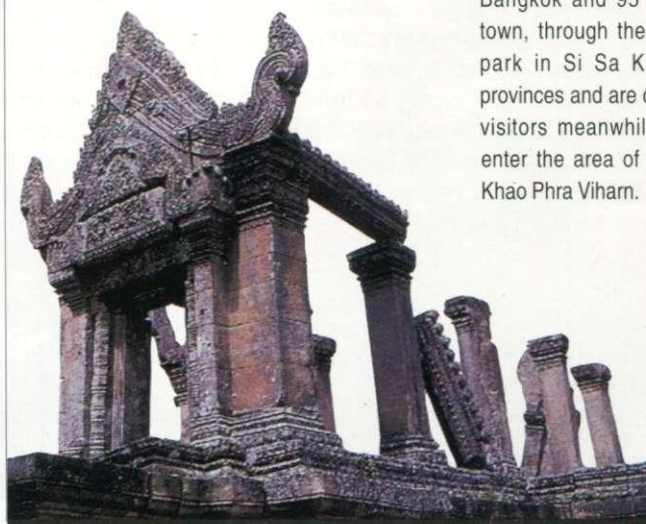
The Prasat Phra Viharn, an ancient Khmer sanctuary situated on the Thai-Cambodian border on Khao Phra Viharn (Phra Viharn Mountain) has reopened. The temple was previously closed for two years due to environmental problems.

Prasat Phra Viharn was built by four Cambodian kings between the end of the ninth century and at the beginning of the tenth century. There was a territorial dispute between

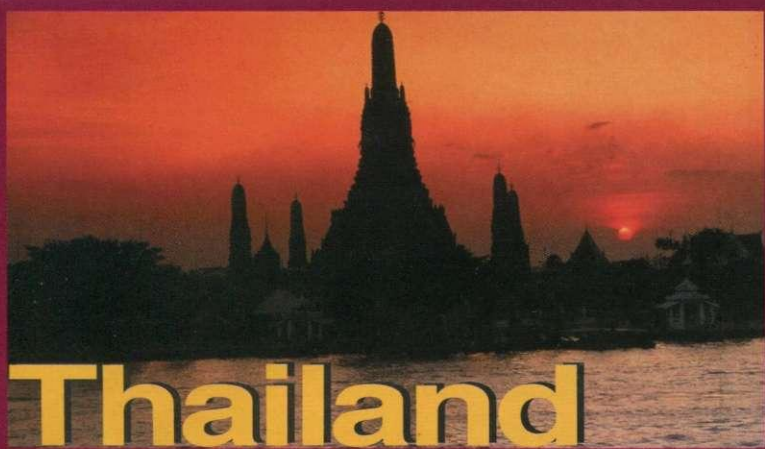
Thailand and Cambodia for the area that went on for several years before it was officially declared to be a part of Cambodia in 1962.

Now, both Thailand and Cambodia have discussed the possibility of developing the temple, which is reached by a steep ascent from both the Cambodian and Thai side, into a tourist attraction.

Thai visitors can access the sanctuary, which is located about 630 kilometres from Bangkok and 95 kilometres from Si Sa Ket town, through the Khao Phra Viharn national park in Si Sa Ket and Ubon Ratchathani provinces and are charged 20 baht. International visitors meanwhile are charged 200 baht to enter the area of Khao Phra Viharn.







## Aims To Be Tourism Capital of Asia

Starting October 2003 throughout 2004, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) is set to turn Thailand into the Tourism Capital of Asia. A target of 11 million visitor arrival and 67.12 million domestic visitors has been set by the TAT. This is up by 13.4% and 3.10% from the respective projected arrival of 2003.

Targeted revenue earnings from foreign visitors was up by 17.40% to 340,000 million baht and domestic visitors up by 20.07% to 362,500 million.

Potential markets that has been identified in the Asia-Pacific region are Japan, China, Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, India, Indochina and New Zealand. There will also be extra promotion in other markets including the UK, Italy, Russia, Spain, Finland and the UAE. These markets contribute about 80% of Thailand's total visitor arrivals.

Thailand's international slogan, 'Amazing Thailand - Unseen Treasures' would be maintained while the domestic slogan is 'Unseen Thailand'.

## BANGKOK Adjudged Best Tourism City

Travel + Leisure magazine, one of the world's best known travel magazines, has voted Bangkok as the Best Tourism City in Asia and the third Best Tourism City in the world. The magazine, based in New York, surveyed 200,000 readers as part of its 2003 World's Best Awards Reader's Poll. Votes for the Best Tourism City were based on attractions, art and culture, cuisine, friendliness of people, shopping and value for money.



## TAT Undergoes Major Restructuring Exercise

A major restructuring at TAT, which is in line with the concept of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), took place on 1 June 2003.

The concept and the restructuring aims to improve TAT's marketing strategy to deliver the right products to the right consumer segments at the right time.

The restructuring saw TAT divided into five main departments namely; International Marketing headed by Mrs. Phornsiri Manohan (Deputy Governor); Domestic Marketing headed by Mrs. Juthaporn Rerngronasa (Deputy Governor) which will implement the appropriate strategies and marketing support efforts; Publicity and Public Relations, headed by Mr. Suraphon Svetasreni (Deputy Governor), which will handle advertising, public relations and marketing campaigns as well as be responsible for the image of Thai tourism; Tourism Products, headed by Mr. Santichai Eauchongprasit (Deputy Governor), which will be responsible for policies and marketing plans as well as developing tourism products and Administration headed by Ms. Pensuda Priaram (Deputy Governor).

## Grand Opening of the Queen's Gallery

Her Majesty Queen Sirikit was present at the Grand Opening Ceremony of the Queen's Gallery last August 9, 2003. The exhibition, which featured works by His Majesty King Bhumibol and members of the Royal Family, also included works from renowned national artists Chakrab and Potthyakrit, Tawal Dachanee and Kamol Tasanachalee. There was also an inclusion of the past winners of the Bualuang Art Competition which was organised by the Bangkok Bank Foundation such as Chalermchai Kositpipat, Hathai Bunnag and Wichoke Mukdamanee and the embroidery painting that won the first prize for the Support Foundation, under Her Majesty's Patronage.



The Opening Ceremony highlighted the national artist, Tawan Duchanee who created a painting in the presence of a special audience with Her Majesty the Queen.

## Harnessing Strategic Business and Technology Partnership for Economic Growth

The island of Langkawi became the venue of the Malaysia-Thailand Technology and Business Partnership Dialogue on July 27-28, with the aim of promoting closer collaboration in economic and technological development between the two countries.

On hand to deliver the keynote address were Prime Minister Dato' Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his Thai counterpart Dr Thaksin Shinawatra.

The dialogue was jointly organised by the Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology (MIGHT) and the National Science and Technology Development Agency of Thailand in

collaboration with the Malaysia International Trade and Industry Ministry and the Ministry of Science and Technology of Thailand.

The two-day dialogue brought together key economic development officials and policy makers from relevant ministries, captains of industry, academic experts and entrepreneurs from both countries.

They collectively put forward pragmatic solutions and concrete joint action plans for the common purpose of promoting and furthering the interest of both nations.

Through the sharing of experiences and know-how, technology transfer and strategic alliances,

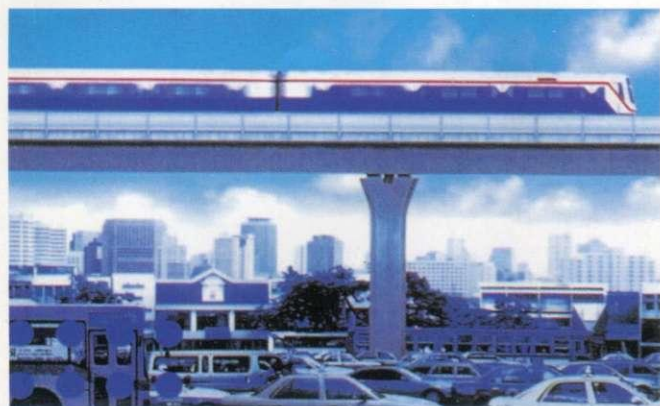


both countries would be able to effectively mobilise the diverse resource endowments and collective pool of human resource capabilities within this region for mutual benefits.

The dialogue was closed by Malaysia's Deputy Prime Minister, Dato' Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.



# Second Mass-Transit System on Schedule



The second mass-transit system in Bangkok was officially opened on August 12, to mark Her Majesty the Queen's Birthday. The system connects the Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre with several hotels, shopping centres and business districts. Running from the main railway station, Hua Lamphong, the rail travels 20 kilometres and has 17 stations and four interchange stations.

TAT Governor, Mrs. Juthamas Siriwan said, "The subway will supplement the existing Bangkok Skytrain that is

already playing a major role in helping visitors, business people and convention delegates get around easily and conveniently. Bangkok is already known as an exciting, vibrant city and these transit systems will make it even more lively. The subway will make a substantial contribution to increasing visitor's average length of stay and daily expenditure."

The System will be operated by private investors on a 25-year concession from the government's Mass Transit Authority of Thailand (MRTA).

## The Amazing Bangkok Golf Challenge

Some 30 golfers from Brunei Darussalam participated in the Amazing Bangkok Golf Challenge in July.

Organised by Syarikat Straits Central Agencies (B) Sdn Bhd, it was a resounding success as it allowed the golfers to experience the joys of playing in several courses in Bangkok.



## The Third King's Cup Elephant Polo Tournament



The Third King's Cup Elephant Polo Tournament would be held at Anantara Resort and Spa from September 16-21 at the Som Dej Phra Suriyothai military ground in Hua Hin.

The coveted King's Cup trophy will be the object of competition with the event played according to the World Elephant Polo Association rules. Featured participating teams are Tiger Tops Nepal, Maharajah's Team India, Taprobane Sri Lanka, King's Royal Hussars England, Mercedes Benz Germany, Tickle and the Ivories Singapore, Srewy Tuskers ladies' team, Chivas Regal, Sandalford Australia and also a team from Thailand.

The event, which is a highlight in Thai calendar, is aimed to raise money for Thailand's indispensable and dedicated National Elephant Institute which provides welfare, sustenance, medical care and employment for Thailand's elephants and mahouts.

Last year, the event raised one million baht (US\$24,000) for the institute, while a 1.5 million baht target is projected for this year.

Must-see events include the opening parade in which elephants and players dress in their team colours and parade into the ground led by a brass band.

## TAT, THA & TICA Road Show in KL

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), the Thai Hotels Association (THA) and the Thailand Incentive & Convention Association (TICA) jointly organised a road show in Kuala Lumpur on August 5.

The road show enabled members of the Malaysian travel industry to meet with representatives from the Thai hotel industry, convention centres and TAT.

The TAT Deputy Governor for Overseas Marketing, Mrs Phornsiri Manoharn, led the road show.

The Ambassador of Thailand to Malaysia HE Mr Chaisiri Anamarn was the Guest of Honour at a dinner function held in the evening.





# Thai Food Comes to **BRUNEI**

Food lovers in Bandar Seri Begawan were given a sampling of the diversity of Thai culinary delights, when the Sheraton Utama Hotel held a Thai Food Promotion in July.

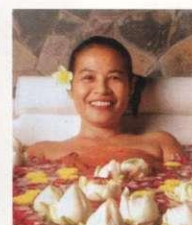
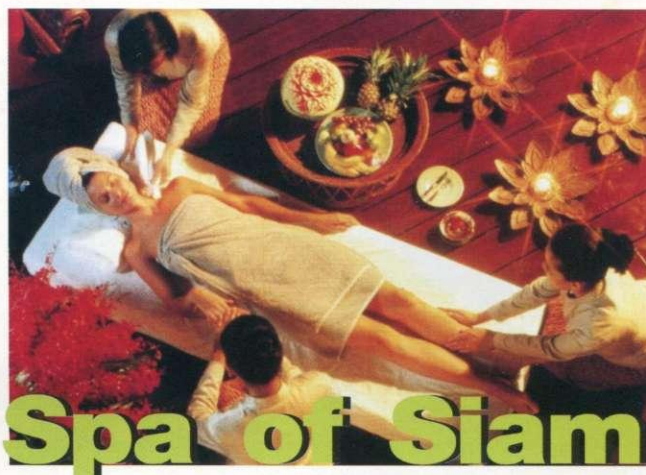
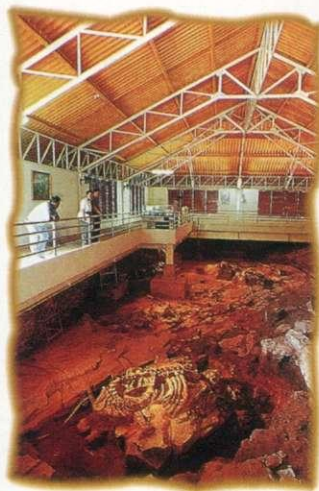
The promotion, with the assistance of Thai International Airlines in Brunei, was launched by HE Mr Sunthon Niyomyath, the Ambassador of Thailand to Brunei Darussalam.



## Eyeing **Dinosaurs**

Thailand is home to one of the best preserved sites of dinosaur fossils in Southeast Asia. At the Phu Wiang National Park, visitors can witness traces of the giant beasts that once roamed the mountainous area over 150 million years ago. There are giant footprints, fully formed dinosaur fossils and various other prehistoric evidence in this treasure trove called Phu Wiang Dinosaur Museum.

The neighbouring provinces make great visits as Khon Kaen, Kalasin, Maha Sarakham and Roi Et are also famous for their friendliness and rich culture. The ladies of Ban Phon weave beautiful Prae Wa silk while hundreds of tortoises are cared for at Tortoise Village. At Ban Khok Sa Nga, King Cobras are favourite pets.



## **Spa of Siam**

Established in 1998, the Spa of Siam has a team of over 100 certified therapists offering over 6,000 hours of treatments per month. The centre also boast of experience with superior hotel clients, in-depth project knowledge, local and regional consultants, independent certification and ongoing quality assurance and qualified staff in Aromatheraphy, Shiatsu, Reiki, Reflexology, Beauty Therapy, Bach Flower Remedies, Remedial Massage, Swedish Massage, Ayurvedic Shirodhara Treatment, Herbal Treatment, etc.

Located in Bangrak, Bangkok, the company also acts as a Spa consultancy company that develops many hotel Spa facilities. Working closely with an existing hotel, the company develops a spa that fits with the client's individual identity and provides quality training for the masseurs.



*Products Festival and King's Cup Long-Tailed Ko Lae Boat*



*King's Cup Long-Tailed Boat Races at Phitsanulok*



*King's Cup Elephant Polo*



*Vegetarian Festival*

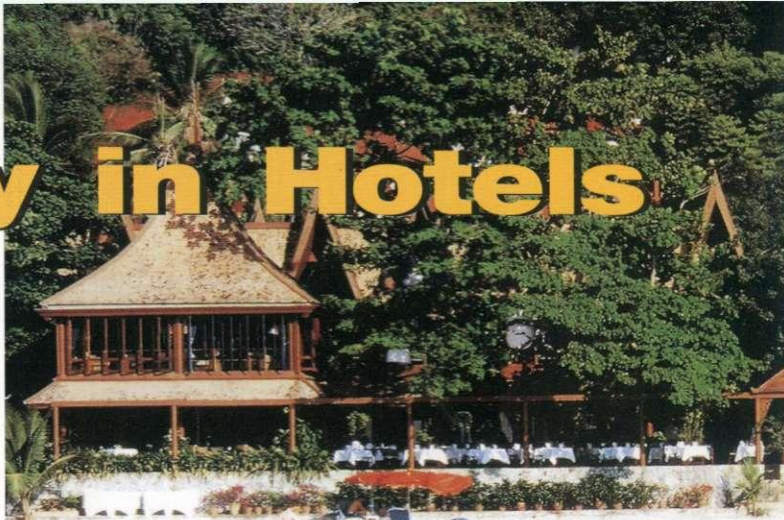


# A Hotel For Those Who Prefer Not To Stay in Hotels

The Mom Tri's Boathouse & Villa Royale is a unique holiday experience that stands by the slogan 'A Hotel For People Who Prefer Not To Stay In Hotels'. Designed by M.L. Tri Devakul and consisting of 33 superior rooms and 3 suites, the Mom Tri Boathouse is seated on the beautiful coast of Kata Beach, Phuket. The Villa Royale meanwhile, has 6 luxurious villa suites facing the turquoise Andaman Sea.

The boathouse is known for its distinctive style of a boutique hotel and offers discreet sophistication, a factor that has endeared it to many visitors. Fine living here is accompanied by fine dining, including an impressive list of over 460 quality label wines from a wine-cellar that won the 'Award of Excellence' from the Wine Spectator magazine since 1995 in its international menu.

The Mon Tri's Villa Royale speaks of the highest standard of privacy and comfort and features a free form saltwater pool on the hillside, ornamental ponds, and airy pavilions facing tropical gardens and sea.



**Belle Villa**  
Resort, Chiangmai

## An Unforgettable Retreat

Belle Villa is an exclusive resort hidden in the green hills of North Thailand. Consisting of 40 rooms and 15 two-bedroom House Suites, there is much emphasis on comfort and privacy in every room. The theme 'Nature' reverbrates throughout the House Suites as a verandah faces a natural landscape.

Activities are abundant at Belle Villa with a marvelous array of trees and flowering plants spread over the valley and hills making the simple activity of jogging in the morning or biking through lanes, one to savour. Tours to historic and natural sights is easily arranged while the sauna and massage facility available will prove too irresistible to many.



For the romantic at heart, nothing much beats a candlelit dinner under the starry night sky. The serenity of Belle Villa will surely leave a lasting memory.

## Calendar of events

Date	Event - Venue
Sept 13-14	<b>King's Cup Long-Tailed Boat Races at Phitsanulok</b> - Along the Nan River in front of Wat Phra Sri Rattana Mahathat, Muang District, Phitsanulok Province. A parade of beautifully decorated boats along with cultural shows will be displayed before the start of the competition for the King's Cup long-tailed boat races.
Sept 16-21	<b>King's Cup Elephant Polo</b> - Som Dej Phra Sri Suriyothai Military Camp, Prachuap Khiri Khan Province. Local and international polo teams take part in this event. Featured also are a demonstration of the abilities of these elephant in painting, playing musical instruments and participating in a parade.
Sept 18-21	<b>Wax Castle &amp; Boat Racing Festival</b> - at Wat Phra That Choeng Chum, Sakon Nakhon Province. Celebrating the end of Buddhist Lent (Ok Phansa), people in the northeast (I-san) mould beeswax into miniature Buddhist temples and shrines (wax castle) in order to gain merit, which will determine their future rebirth.
Sept 21-25	<b>Products Festival and King's Cup Long-Tailed Ko Lae Boat</b> - At Narathiwat along the Bang Nara River, Muang District, Narathiwat Province. Besides the King's Cup long tailed <i>ko lae</i> boat races, visitors are able to enjoy other events including Long-Gong Day, Krajoed Day and Songbird contests.
Sept 24-28	<b>Diving Buddha Image Festival</b> - Wat Thraiphun, Muang District, Petchabun Province. The ceremony of the diving Buddha image is accompanied by a procession to mark respect to the Phra Buddha Maha Thammaraacha image, witness ritual dances, meritmaking, local plays, and the Petchabun Food Fair.
Sept 25-Oct 4	<b>Vegetarian Festival</b> - Phuket province. Taking place at spirit houses around Phuket, Mahayana Buddhists refrain from eating meat. There is also a rite to welcome all nine planetary saints, a procession of Chinese deity images, a parade, and jaw-dropping stunts believed to be inspired by gods.
Oct 17-21	<b>Illuminated Boat Procession</b> - Mekong River, Nakhon Phanom Province. An annual event on the Mekong River marks the end of the Ok Phansa (Buddhist Lent) with adorned boats containing assorted offerings launched adrift on the river when night falls.
Oct 18-22	<b>Tak Bat Dao</b> - Wat Sang Kat Rattanakhiri, Uthai Thani Province. This is the first day of the waning of the moon in the eleventh lunar month and the end of the Buddhist Rains Retreat, the Tak Bat Devo is performed.
Oct 19-20	<b>Rap Bua Tradition</b> - Amphoe Bang Phli, Samut Prakan Province. Merit making, cultural procession, a beauty contest, water sport competition, boat contest and a light and sound presentation is the highlight of this event.
Oct 20-26	<b>Phon Drum-Beating Contest &amp; Buddha Image Procession</b> - Provincial Hall and Saensuk Lampam Beach, Phatthalung Province. Expect drum beating and elaborately decorative boat competitions and a meritorious ritual known as Tak Bat Devo.
Oct 21	<b>Poi Loen Sip Et</b> - Wat Phra That Doi Kong Mu, Mae Hong Son Province. This event marks the end of Buddhist Rains Retreat. Merit-making ceremony, a Chong Phara procession (Chong Phara is a traditional castle built from wood and coloured papers).